(a) whether it is a fact that Government plans to set up a four lane, 5871 km long golden quadrilateral road network connecting the four Metros;

(b) if so, whether the work is to be completed by 2003 as against the original plan of 2005; and

(c) if so, the progress made on this so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir, in a length of 5952 Km.

(b) Yes, Sir. Most of the work on Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) is proposed to be completed by the year 2003.

(c) Four-laning on 504 Kms. length of National Highways on the GQ has been completed and work on 732 is in progress.

Sethu Samudaram Project

1334. SHRI P. SOUNDARARAJAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether feasibility study and environment impact assessment study of Sethu Samudaram project have been conducted by the Public Investment Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if the answer to part (a) is in negative, the reasons for delay; and

(d) whether any fund has been allocated for the techno-economic feasibility study of the project as promised by the Finance Minister in the Budget for 1999-2000.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (d) Committee of Public Investment Board has approved the proposal for first stage clearance for preparation of Detailed Feasibility Study and Environment Impact Assessment Study for the project. Regarding allocation of funds for conducting the above studies, Planning Commission have advised that the funds may be met from the overall Budget of the Ministry of Surface Transport. The above studies will take a period of about two years. Thus, the proposal is at a preliminary stage and the final decision for implementation of the project will be taken only after conducting the above studies.